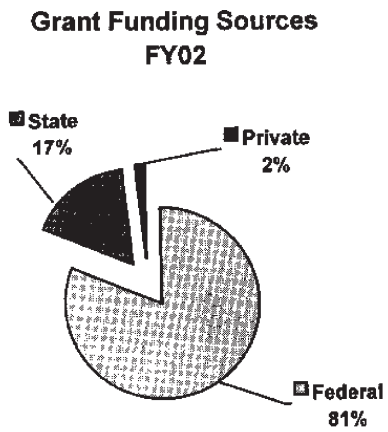


Finance Factoids

The value of grant funding... This fiscal year (FY02) Shrewsbury will receive nearly \$1.3M in grant funding from the federal and state governments and private sources. (See chart below for allocation.) This is a vital source of revenue for school operations.

- Fast facts:
- Fully or partially supports 38 different teaching positions
 - Over 50% is targeted for special education
 - Over \$225K targeted for elementary reading support



Shrewsbury School Journal

Communications Committee

The non-profit *Shrewsbury School Journal* is published three times a year and reaches every household in the diverse and growing town of Shrewsbury. It is published by the central office of the Shrewsbury Public Schools with the help and expertise of many citizens. The mission of the *Shrewsbury School Journal* is to provide an accurate source of information about our school system and the town in which we live. We hope to foster a community of continuous learners.

Anthony J. Bent
Superintendent

Patrick Collins
*Director of
Business Services*

Dawna Alphonse
Project Coordinator

Nancy Hochstein
School Committee Member

School resource officer appointed

THOMAS M. KENNEDY
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Since early October students and faculty at the Middle School and High School have seen a new staff member in their buildings – School Resource Officer Ronald Benoit. Through the continuing efforts to build upon his community policing philosophy, Police Chief Wayne Sampson led the effort to secure federal (United States Department of Justice) grant money to establish the position of School Resource Officer (SRO) in Shrewsbury. Building Principals and Superintendent of Schools Anthony Bent, along with members of the School Committee, were enthusiastic and supportive when Chief Sampson presented the concept.

Officer Benoit has been a police officer for seventeen years and has been a member of the Shrewsbury Police Department for the past three years. Among the objectives of the SRO program is to build a positive relationship between police and students. While SRO's have been in urban schools for a number of years, the concept has now evolved to include suburban communities as well. Our neighboring town of Westboro also has a SRO assigned to the schools.

The schools in Shrewsbury have enjoyed a very positive relationship with the Shrewsbury Police Department for a number of years and the presence of Officer Benoit in the schools will further this relationship. Officer Benoit has been interacting with both students and staff. It is not unusual to see him sitting in the cafeteria with a small group of students during the lunch periods. Officer Benoit is a visible presence in the hallways, even though he is not in uniform. It is not uncommon to see him interacting with students before and after school. Benoit encourages the students to get involved in after school activities and programs.

As the SRO, Officer Benoit is



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Officer Ron Benoit

involved in the areas of education and prevention. While a lot of his time in the first few weeks involved meeting students and staff and building a relationship of trust with both school communities, his plans call for increased visits to classrooms to facilitate discussions and make presentations to students. Topics relating to the legal implications of sexual harassment, bullying, threats, drugs, and alcohol will be addressed. He has also been involved in teaching civics lessons to high school students. Although the primary focus of the position is at the middle school and high school, there is also a district-wide responsibility in the areas of truancy and residency. Recently, through the efforts of SRO Benoit, the district was successful in identifying three students who were attending the Shrewsbury Public Schools but who were not town residents. The students are no longer enrolled in the district. Officer Benoit's training and investigative knowledge allowed these cases to be handled in an efficient and effective

manner.

Security is an area that SRO Benoit is also assisting the schools. The high school and middle school buildings are utilized to the maximum. When the school day ends there are a number of school and community activities that are scheduled in these facilities. Benoit has assisted the school administration in addressing overall building security issues, including acts of vandalism, as well as traffic flow and parking issues. Benoit is also working with the high school administration in planning for security needs for the new high school.

As Middle School Principal Maryjo Moon points out, "Whether it's security issues or more student centered concerns, it is nice to have someone who offers a different perspective - another set of eyes to look at things through a different lens."

Officer Benoit remains an employee of the Shrewsbury Police Department and reports to Police Chief Wayne Sampson. Day to day he works in consultation with Principals Dan Gutekanst and Maryjo Moon and Superintendent of Schools Anthony Bent.

Benoit is often involved in counseling students, giving advice regarding the law, and negotiating disputes. While he has been trained as a police officer he brings many of the same skills to his job that an effective educator brings to school, including sound judgement, good people skills and the ability to establish positive connections with students.

While Maryjo Moon and Dan Gutekanst have different training and experience than SRO Benoit, they all share a common vision - in order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning it is critical to have safe and secure schools. With clear communication and cooperation, both principals, in partnership with SRO Benoit, are creating positive school environments for students, staff, and the community of Shrewsbury.

Crisis response manuals created

THOMAS M. KENNEDY
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Among the district goals for the current school year is the development of a Crisis Response Manual for each school.

Since the tragedy at Columbine High School much has been written about school violence. Dr. Anthony Bent, Superintendent, points out research indicating that the best possible approach to safe schools for students and staff involves the "establishment of strong school cultures in which respect, participation, and communication are the hallmarks". Dr. Bent stated "the best prevention regarding student violence at school is to do what the Shrewsbury Public Schools are doing each day - concentrating their efforts on creating healthy climates in which people feel respected, safe, and valued."

Included in creating a healthy climate is developing and maintaining a positive and open relationship with the local police department. The district is proud to have a solid and supportive partnership with Police Chief Wayne Sampson and the Shrewsbury Police Department. An example of this partnership is the efforts of Police Chief Wayne Sampson and his staff in securing a federal grant to place a School Resource Officer in the district. Officer Ron Benoit started his new role this past October and his

responsibilities primarily involve working with staff and students at the Middle School and High School. In a few short months Officer Benoit has had a positive impact on the overall school climate at both the Middle School and High School.

Although the September 11 terrorist attacks have heightened the security awareness issues in all sectors of the United States, the district initiated its formal efforts for the crisis response

In a few short months Officer Benoit has had a positive impact on the overall school climate at both the Middle School and High School.

manuals at its summer District Leadership Conference. The School Safety Liaison for the Worcester Public Schools presented an overview of the need and importance of developing crisis response manuals. It is important to note that each of the schools in Shrewsbury has had an established crisis response team in place for a number of years to deal with emergency issues. Crisis situations include: severe weather conditions, natural disaster, acts of violence,

fire, death, accidents, child abduction, and trauma.

The crisis response manual is meant to be a resource and procedural guide. School administrators are encouraged to use their judgement with regard to all potential or actual emergencies. Each crisis situation is unique, and the need for alternative procedures or resources may be appropriate. Over the past few months building administrators have been meeting to develop the various components of the crisis response manuals. The documents are currently a work in progress but the major sections of the manual will include the following:

General Overview: This will present an overview of the crisis response plan, including a listing of the staff who serve on the crisis response team. There are several positions that will serve on each of the teams, including Principal, Assistant Principal, School Nurse, School Psychologist and/or Counselor, and Building Custodian. Teams are not limited to these positions.

Facility Overview: Each of our buildings covers a large area in square footage and it is vital that the manual have up to date floor plans, including the location of classrooms, boiler rooms, electrical and power areas, water shut off valves, entrances and exits.

Manuals, see page 7